

GUIDE TO THE  
U.S. NAVY JAG CORPS

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## Table of Contents

The Navy Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps .....	3
Who We Are, What We Do .....	3
Practicing Law in the Navy .....	3
Profile of a JAG Officer .....	3
Compensation .....	4
Promotion Patterns .....	4
Yearly Salary .....	4
Benefits .....	5
Intern/Extern Programs .....	7
Becoming a Navy JAG Officer .....	7
Programs .....	7
Accession Pipeline for Attorneys Entering the Navy JAG Corps .....	8
The JAG Officer Career .....	10
First Tour Judge Advocate .....	10
Second Tour & Beyond .....	10
Sea Duty .....	10
Land-Based Assignments in Combat Areas .....	10
Life in the Service .....	11
Tour Assignments .....	11
Assignment Locations .....	11
On Base and Off Base Living .....	11
Length of Stay at Duty Station .....	11
Ready to Apply? .....	12

## THE NAVY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S (JAG) CORPS

### WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

The Navy JAG Corps includes a cadre of nearly 900 uniformed attorneys in the United States Navy, who are commissioned naval officers in pay grades ranging from lieutenant junior grade (LTJG) through vice admiral (VADM). Navy judge advocates serve the Navy and their nation throughout the world, both ashore and at sea.

Being a naval officer instills certain intangible qualities that will last a lifetime: self-confidence, pride, teamwork, and a sense of purpose. As Navy judge advocates, we understand these are qualities that make us better leaders and better lawyers, both now and in the future. The Navy offers you the chance to put your legal skills to the test and to defend and serve your country.

### PRACTICING LAW IN THE NAVY

As a Navy judge advocate, you will experience the most diverse legal practice available to an attorney and can be assigned to practice anywhere in the world. Some of the important areas of our practice include:

- International Law (Law of the Sea, law of armed conflict, international agreements, and foreign criminal jurisdiction)
- Operational Law (Rules of Engagement)
- Military Justice (Prosecution, defense, judiciary, and appellate)
- Administrative Law (Government ethics, regulations, and legislation)
- Admiralty and Maritime Law (Admiralty tort and salvage claims, and international and domestic maritime issues)
- Civil Litigation (Cases incident to the operation of the Navy, in conjunction with the Department of Justice)
- Environmental Law (Laws protecting human health, the environment, and historic and cultural resources)
- Legal Assistance (Personal legal services and advice to military members)
- Information Operations and Intelligence Law (National security and cyberspace matters)

### PROFILE OF A JAG OFFICER

The ideal candidates for commission in the Navy JAG Corps are those who have a deep commitment to public service, strong leadership traits, diverse life experiences, positive attitudes, a sense of adventure, and engaging personalities. We are looking for those who are capable of being strategic thinkers, as well as being capable of executing items quickly at the tactical level. In short, all applicants are judged on the "whole person" concept.

## COMPENSATION

### PROMOTION PATTERNS

Successful applicants to the Navy JAG Corps Student Program (SP) are commissioned as inactive reserve ensigns during law school. Inactive reserve officers do not receive pay or allowances while in law school. After passing the bar examination and reporting for extended active duty starting at Naval Justice School (NJS), officers receive a superseding appointment as a lieutenant junior grade in the Navy. Successful applications to the Navy JAG Corps Direct Appointment (DA) Program are commissioned as active duty lieutenants junior grade before attending Officer Development School (ODS). Navy JAG Corps officers can expect to promote to lieutenant approximately one year after their first day at the Naval Justice School.

SP and DA applicants receive service credit (for promotion purposes only) of up to three years for the period they attended law school while not in a commissioned status (more credit is given if the student has prior commissioned service). Service credit accelerates an individual's promotion and determines rank. This means that one may expect promotion to lieutenant after no more than 12 months of active duty as a lieutenant junior grade. The granting of service credit does not alter an individual's pay rate. Basic pay longevity is computed in accordance with the pay entry base date (PEBD) established upon the officer's initial acceptance of a commission. Therefore, an earlier commissioning date results in higher overall pay when you enter active duty.

Officers in the Navy JAG Corps presently serve approximately six-eight years as lieutenants before they are eligible for promotion to lieutenant commander (pay grade O-4). Lieutenant commanders serve approximately four-seven years before they are eligible for promotion to commander (pay grade O-5). Time in grade is subject to congressional and Navy officer strength planning decisions which are determined annually. Navy JAG Corps officer promotion patterns for the most part match those of their sea-going counterparts. The promotion schedule below reflects averages and may fluctuate up to 20% as retention rates and many other factors may require variance.

<u>Pay Grade</u>	<u>Average Number of Years in Rank</u>
Lieutenant junior grade (LTJG/O-2)	1 year
Lieutenant (LT/O-3)	6 years
Lieutenant commander (LCDR/O-4)	5 years
Commander (CDR/O-5)	6 years
Captain/Flag (CAPT/O-6, Flag/O-8 or O-9)	Varies based on retirement

### YEARLY SALARY

Active duty judge advocate pay starts at between \$53,000 and \$70,000 per year as a lieutenant junior grade (O-2) and between \$63,000 and \$90,000 per year as a lieutenant (O-3), depending on when the officer accepts a commission and where he/she is stationed. This amount includes basic pay and certain non-taxable allowances, such as those for housing and subsistence. Housing allowances vary according to the cost of living in the area to which you are assigned. Pay increases come with promotion and longevity.

For more information regarding basic pay and allowances, visit: [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil).

## BENEFITS

When you join the Navy JAG Corps, you become an important part of the Navy and will receive an impressive array of benefits designed to keep you and your family healthy, comfortable, and secure. All of these benefits are above and beyond your Navy pay and allowances. These benefits include:

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### HEALTH & LIFE INSURANCE

- Full medical coverage and care in Navy or civilian facilities for the service member and his/her dependent family (see <http://www.tricare.mil/>).
- Full dental coverage and care for the service member and his/her dependent family.
- \$400,000 life insurance policy for \$29/month (See <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/default.htm>).

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### TIME OFF

- 30 days paid vacation each year.
- 10 paid federal holidays per year.
- Sick leave for personal medical needs or care of family members and adoption.

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### RETIREMENT

- 401k-like Thrift Savings Plan (see <http://www.tsp.gov/> for more information). Automatic 1% DoD contribution to the service member's Thrift Savings Plan, and up to 4% Department of Defense matching contributions.
- Generous retirement income after 20 years of service (see <http://militarypay.defense.gov/BlendedRetirement/>)

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### LIFE AND WORK BALANCE

- 12 weeks paid maternity leave for service members who give birth; 10 days parental leave for service members that adopt children or whose spouse has given birth.
- Subsidized child care, an exceptional family member program, and youth programs (see <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>).
- Department of Defense schools in some geographic locations (See <http://www.dodea.edu/home/index.cfm>).
- Recreational discounts and services through Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs (see <http://navymwr.org/>).
- Family support services including Family Advocacy, Parenting, Personal Financial Management, Relocation Assistance, Spouse Employment Assistance, Spouse Tuition Aid, and Transition Assistance Programs (see <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>).

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### TRAVEL

- Foreign duty and travel opportunities through temporary or permanent assignments.
- Discounted travel.

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### EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- School debt repayment: Under the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA), you may qualify for loan forgiveness and an income-based repayment plan. Additionally, military service qualifies as public service for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.

- Retention Bonuses: Navy JAG Corps officers are eligible for a total of \$60,000 in retention bonuses paid over three installments at different career milestones (at approximately the four-year mark, seven-year mark and 10-year mark) that can be used by officers to pay off their student debt.
- Funded Graduate Education: Navy judge advocates have the opportunity for fully funded graduate education leading to award of a Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree. Navy judge advocates have attended graduate programs at civilian law schools such as Harvard, Georgetown, Columbia, George Washington University, University of Pennsylvania, Berkeley, University of San Diego, Lewis and Clark, University of Virginia, and many others. Areas of study include military law, international law, environmental law, and trial advocacy. Post-graduate opportunities also exist at the Army Judge Advocate General's School, Naval War College, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Defense University, and the Army War College.
- GI Bill & Transferability: Transferability option under the Post-9/11 GI Bill allows service members to transfer all or some unused benefits to their spouse or dependent children.

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#### ADDITIONAL PRIVILEGES

- Access to military exchanges (worldwide chain of tax-free "department stores"), which sell brand-name items at discounts (see <http://www.shopmyexchange.com/> or <https://www.mynavyexchange.com/>).
- Access to military commissaries (tax-free grocery stores) that save military families approximately 25% on their food bills (see <http://www.commissaries.com/>).
- Use of officers clubs around the world.
- VA Guaranteed Home Loan Program (see <http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/>)

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#### MOVING ASSISTANCE

The Department of Defense will contract with a commercial mover for the movement of your household goods to your first permanent duty station. Both you and your family are reimbursed for travel expenses from home directly to your first duty station. Subsequent moves to other duty stations, including your final move returning you to your home of record upon release from active duty, will be at the Government's expense.

Of note, only the officer is entitled to travel expenses to Newport, RI for Officer Development School (ODS) and Naval Justice School (NJS) training, and household goods are not moved to Newport, RI. This is because of the short amount of time the officer will remain in this location before moving permanently to their first duty station.

## INTERN/EXTERN PROGRAMS

The Navy JAG Corps offers summer internships and semester externships for qualified law students. As a Navy JAG Corps intern/extern, you'll be assigned to a legal office and gain experience in traditional practice areas like military justice (criminal prosecution and defense) and legal assistance (providing general legal advice to Sailors and their families).

***For more information and eligibility requirements for the internship and externship programs, please visit our website at [www.jag.navy.mil/careers](http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers).***

## BECOMING A NAVY JAG OFFICER

### PROGRAMS

The Navy JAG Corps offers a variety of programs designed to attract the best and brightest lawyers. Below is a description of these programs.

***For more information and eligibility requirements for all our programs please visit our website at [www.jag.navy.mil/careers](http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers).***

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### STUDENT PROGRAM (SP)

The Navy JAG Corps Student Program (SP) permits law students to commission in the inactive Naval Reserve while attending law school. Upon law school graduation, passage of a bar examination, and the completion of Officer Development School, SP participants serve on active duty for four years, beginning as a lieutenant junior grade. This is our largest recruiting program and the most common way to become a Navy JAG Corps officer.

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### DIRECT APPOINTMENT (DA) PROGRAM

The Navy JAG Corps Direct Appointment (DA) Program permits licensed attorneys to be appointed directly into the Navy JAG Corps. DA participants will be promoted to lieutenant junior grade on their first day of active duty in the Basic Lawyer Course. DA participants are obligated to serve at least four years on active duty. This is a small program designed to supplement the JAG Corps with experienced and capable legal professionals.

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### LAW EDUCATION PROGRAM (LEP)

The Law Education Program (LEP) is designed for current active duty Naval officers to enter law school, earn a Juris Doctor, and then serve as a career judge advocate. Applicants must be on active duty as commissioned officers, be college graduates, and be in pay grades O-1, O-2, or O-3, with 2 to 6 years' active service (including any active enlisted time) at the time of proposed entry into law school. Applicants must also be able to complete 20 years of active service as a commissioned officer before their 62nd birthday, and must have taken the LSAT and applied to an ABA-accredited law school. Look for an annual NAVADMIN announcing the deadline and application procedures for the LEP board each year.

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## IN-SERVICE PROCUREMENT PROGRAM (IPP)

The Navy JAG Corps In-service Procurement Program (IPP) provides a pathway to commission as a JAG Corps officer for active-duty, enlisted Sailors. Applicants may apply as either a Direct Commission Applicant or a Funded Legal Education Training Applicant. IPP Funded Legal Education Training selectees will remain on active-duty, with pay and benefits, while attending law school to earn a Juris Doctor (JD) and completing the bar examination. Look for an annual NAVADMIN announcing the deadline and application procedures for the IPP board each year.

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## RESERVE LATERAL TRANSFERS

There is currently no program that allows law students or licensed attorneys, without at least one year cumulative active duty experience, to commission directly into the Navy JAG Corps as a reserve officer. However, career-motivated reservists with the requisite education and professional experience may seek a direct commission or a lateral transfer into the Reserve JAG Corps. Availability of these programs is subject to the requirements and needs of the Reserve JAG Corps.

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## ACCESSION PIPELINE FOR ATTORNEYS ENTERING THE NAVY JAG CORPS

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### COMMISSIONING PROCESS

Applying for the Navy JAG Corps does not obligate you in any way. Once you have applied, if you are professionally recommended by the Navy JAG Corps and all Navy commissioning process requirements are met, you will be offered a commission by your Navy recruiter.

Only once you accept the commission will you become obligated—that is, after you have taken the oath of office for a commission and signed a Service Agreement.

After you are commissioned, you will be required to serve four years on active duty. This time period starts when you report to your first duty station after your training is complete. After your four-year active duty obligation, you must remain an additional four years in an inactive reserve, active reserve, or active duty status. While in an inactive status, you are not serving in the military but are subject to recall to active duty during the four years if a major war/conflict requires such a recall. At present there is no annual drill requirement, nor any requirement to take an active part in the Reserve Program once in inactive status. If you want to continue your military affiliation while pursuing a civilian career, you may continue drilling one weekend a month and two weeks a year in the active Navy Reserve.

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### OFFICER DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL


Applicants who have never served as a commissioned officer in the Navy will attend Officer Development School (ODS). ODS is a five-week course held at Naval Station Newport in Newport, Rhode Island. ODS provides training necessary to prepare you to function in your role as a newly commissioned Naval Officer. It provides a basic introduction into fundamental aspects of leadership while providing a working knowledge of available references.

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### NAVAL JUSTICE SCHOOL



After completing ODS and receiving your bar results, you will be scheduled to attend the Basic Lawyer Course (BLC) at Naval Justice School (NJS) onboard Naval Station Newport. The BLC is offered three times a year with classes beginning in August, October, and January. The ten-week BLC trains Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard lawyers in the fundamentals of military justice and relevant civil law, with particular focus on the development of trial advocacy skills, administrative law and investigations, legal assistance, and basic operational law. Upon completion of the BLC you will report to your first duty station.



## THE JAG OFFICER CAREER

### FIRST TOUR JUDGE ADVOCATE

Upon reporting to your first duty station you will be a First Tour Judge Advocate (FTJA). As an FTJA, you will rotate through the three core Navy JAG Corps practice areas. An FTJA will spend their first 12 months as a judge advocate split equally between Command Services and Legal Assistance. The second 12 months will be spent honing litigation skills in a military justice rotation as either a defense or prosecution attorney. The FTJA curriculum is intended to cement core competencies through a combination of supervised practice, independent research, cooperative learning, observation, and demonstration of skills.

### SECOND TOUR & BEYOND

Officers can choose diverse career experiences in multiple practice areas or seek a professional specialty such as military justice litigation, environmental law, or international law. There are also opportunities to serve overseas and to deploy at sea on an aircraft carrier or as part of a Carrier Strike Group (CSG) or Amphibious Ready Group (ARG).

Wherever assigned, Navy JAG Corps officers perform legal or administrative duties as legal counsel. You might find yourself in a combat zone or on a combatant ship. Although your primary duties will be legal in nature, Navy JAG Corps officers participate in the ship's damage control organization and have the opportunity to assist in ship control functions with all members of ships' crew. Senior Navy judge advocates (lieutenant commanders, commanders, and captains) are frequently involved in mission planning and execution.

### SEA DUTY

Navy judge advocates have the opportunity to serve at sea with the operating forces of the Navy. Positions for men and women interested in sea duty are available aboard aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, submarine tenders, and with afloat staffs embarked on Navy vessels. Sea duty provides the opportunity to work closely with the operating forces of the Navy and offers the adventure and challenge of overseas deployments. Deployments normally last six-ten months and include port-calls to locations throughout Europe and Asia. Deployments also offer the once-in-a-lifetime chance to sail fabled waterways such as the Straits of Malacca, Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, Atlantic Ocean, and through the Mediterranean Sea to the Suez Canal and Red Sea.

### LAND-BASED ASSIGNMENTS IN COMBAT AREAS

Navy JAG Corps officers continue to support land-based overseas contingency operations throughout the world. Navy judge advocates may/can deploy from six months to one year in these critical billets. Currently, these overseas contingency operations assignments are strictly voluntary, as numerous Navy judge advocates continue to volunteer for these historic and challenging positions.

## LIFE IN THE SERVICE

### TOUR ASSIGNMENTS

Every effort is made to assign first tour judge advocates to a geographic area that they desire, but no guarantee can be made in this regard. The changing needs of the Navy drive assignments for all of our attorneys. You will have the opportunity to discuss assignments with your detailer before orders are issued.

### ASSIGNMENT LOCATIONS

Navy Judge advocates have the opportunity to serve in exciting and diverse assignments throughout the world. Major fleet concentration areas include Naples, Italy; Yokosuka, Japan; San Diego, California; Norfolk, Virginia; Bremerton, Washington; Jacksonville, Florida; Pensacola, Florida; Groton, Connecticut; Washington, DC; and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Additional future overseas job opportunities are available in Rota, Spain; Sigonella, Sicily and Rome, Italy; Souda Bay, Greece; Stuttgart and Garmisch, Germany; Diego Garcia; Guam; Sasebo, Japan; Seoul, Korea; Bahrain; Singapore; the Central Command theater of operations; and others. The vast majority of new Navy judge advocates are assigned within the continental United States.

### ON BASE AND OFF BASE LIVING

Officers may live on or off the military base where they are stationed. The advantages to living in military housing include avoiding the difficulties associated with purchasing and selling a home in keeping with the mobile lifestyle of a Naval officer, and close proximity to commissary, exchange, medical, dental and recreational facilities. For more information about on base housing, go to <http://www.acq.osd.mil/housing/housing101.htm>.

Officers who do not live in base quarters receive a monthly Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), which is set consistent with average rental levels in the local economy. BAH is non-taxable. To find out how much you will receive in BAH, go to the calculator located at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm>.

### LENGTH OF STAY AT DUTY STATION

Orders to duty stations within the United States are for an average period of three years. After at least 24 months at a particular location, officers may pursue or be offered subsequent assignments consistent with their career needs and those of the naval service. Prospective candidates should be aware that geographic mobility is a key aspect of naval life. Those who welcome the opportunity to see various parts of their country (and the globe) by traveling to different locations on permanent orders every two-three years will find the Navy lifestyle to be a good fit.

## READY TO APPLY?

Application materials, deadlines, and directions are available on the Navy JAG Corps website at:  
[http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers\\_/careers/opportunities\\_overview.html](http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers_/careers/opportunities_overview.html).

To contact us with questions, please visit [http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers\\_/careers/contact.html](http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers_/careers/contact.html).